

Is This Like... A Date? by alltoowheeler

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Genre: Byeler - Freeform, M/M, The fluff is strong with this one, as is the Gay Panic, ice skating!! hot chocolate!! hand holding!!, is this a date??????? who knows, watch me project all my skating failures onto mike

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Summary:

prompt from zoomingmayfield on tumblr; will and mike go ice skating

Is This Like... A Date?

Will took a careful step onto the ice. His ankle wobbled on the skate blade, then steadied as he pushed off with the other foot and swished across the rink, soft Christmas carols playing over the speakers. He loved skating; every winter weekend his mom could spare, she drove him to the ice rink in Greensburg and he flew around the rink for a couple of hours, forgetting everything else.

But this time, for the first time, Mike was here too.

“Wow, you’re really good,” Mike said as Will skated back towards him. He was hanging onto the side with both hands and his knees were stiff.

“Thanks,” Will said, his cheeks heating. Mike took a few small, wobbly steps and slid, landing on one knee. “Um, do you want some help?” Will asked.

“Sure,” Mike said, blushing slightly as he stood up. He laughed and adjusted his hat. “I’m kinda shit at this, aren’t I?”

“No, you just haven’t practiced,” Will assured him. “Uh, how about we just go really slowly?” He skated slowly next to Mike, who held onto the wall with one hand. “You’re doing great.”

Mike frowned, struggling to keep his balance and move his skates smoothly along the ice. It didn’t help that Will was right next to him, being... well, Will. Mike snuck a glance to his left, watching Will skate slowly but almost effortlessly next to him.

“Do you want to go a little faster?” asked Will.

“Um, okay,” Mike said, his legs stiffening with nervousness.

“You have to bend your knees,” Will pointed out softly.

“Right,” Mike said. He bent his knees slightly and tried to push off away from the wall. He landed on his butt. “Ugh.” He slid his skates

against the ice, trying to get up.

"Here," he heard Will say above him, suppressed laughter in his voice. Mike looked up at Will's pink cheeks. He felt a jolt as he grabbed the hand Will offered. Shit. His sweaty palm slipped in Will's grasp as he hoisted himself to his feet, suddenly looking down at Will instead of up. "Thanks."

"No problem," Will said, his cheeks turning pinker. "Um, want to try again?"

"Yeah," Mike smiled. "Let's go."

Will skated alongside Mike, occasionally giving him pointers. They had gone around the mostly empty rink a couple of times now, gradually gaining speed. Mike had only fallen... three more times.

Will's hand still tingled from those few seconds of holding Mike's. He stuffed it deeper into his pocket. "Uh, how's El?"

"Wouldn't you know? You live with her," Mike deadpanned.

"I meant- how are you guys? Like, the two of you?" Mike and El had broken up before high school started, if they could ever have been considered to be dating.

Mike shrugged. "Good, I guess. We're still good friends, you know?"

Will smiled, remembering countless nights El had been up late talking to Mike on her supercom, both pre- and post-breakup. "I know." He shook himself out of the start of a thought spiral, refusing to think about the two years he'd spent wishing Mike could look at him the way he looked at El. "Hey, you wanna try without the wall?"

Mike's eyes widened. "I guess?"

"It'll be fine, you're doing great."

"Okay."

Mike took a shaky step away from the wall and stumbled. Will jerked his hands out of his pockets and grabbed Mike's arms. "You okay?"

Mike steadied himself, leaning on Will's arms. "Yeah, I'm good." He let go of Will and skated carefully next to him, aware of Will watching him with concern. "Look ma, no hands," Mike joked.

Will rolled his eyes. "Come on." He skated a little faster.

"Hey, wait up—" without thinking, Mike grabbed Will's hand to pull him back. They both froze. "Um." Mike's thoughts raced. "To help me balance?" he said cautiously.

Will exhaled. "Yeah... sounds good." His grip on Mike's hand tightened ever so slightly. "Let's go."

He was holding Mike's hand.

It wasn't like he hadn't before. Like in kindergarten, when they had to pick buddies on walks. Or even just a year ago. We won't let him, Mike had said then, putting his hand over Will's. Will hadn't really felt it then; his memories of that week were numb and shadowy.

He felt it now. Mike's warm fingers laced themselves between his as they skated around the rink. Will took a shaky breath. He was holding Mike's hand. His best friend. His best friend who was on a date with him? Was this a date?

Mike's hand curled around Will's smaller, colder one almost of its own accord. He focused on his skates, trying to ignore his flipping stomach. He knew how he felt about Will, however wrong it was. He'd figured that out by now. But this was new territory. He'd never held Will's hand just to hold his hand. It had always been to protect him, or make him feel safe after an episode. He was having trouble not doing that now, not holding onto Will even tighter in case he disappeared again. In case he lost him again.

And he'd definitely never gone somewhere with Will just to do something alone together... something like Nancy would do with a boy. Mike circled back to the thought he'd had in the car: was this just normal friend ice skating? ...Was this a date?

Will's glance jumped to the large clock on the wall. "Oh, my mom's gonna be here soon, we should get our stuff."

Mike looked at the exit and back at Will. He grinned, his freckled cheeks almost glowing pink with cold. "Race you?"

"You can't even—" but Mike was off already, letting go of Will's hand and heading towards the exit with short, stilted strokes, arms held out to balance. "Jesus." Will shook his head and followed him, quickly catching up and passing him. "Hey!" Mike cried. Will turned around and skated the rest of the way backwards, smiling at Mike as he stepped back onto the carpet.

Mike inched across the rest of the ice and flopped on the floor. "I'll beat you someday."

"You'll have to come and practice," Will said, unlacing his skates.

"Sounds good to me," Mike said. He took off his hat and tried to smooth his messy curls. "So... um. Is this like... a date?"

Will almost fell off his bench. "What?"

Mike shrugged, looking nervous. "I mean we're here by ourselves, we held hands... I just wondered."

"Um." Will's hands shook. Did Mike mean he wanted it to be a date? Just that thought made Will smile. "Uh, I mean... if you want?"

"Oh, okay, cool," Mike said, his cheeks turning pink. He fidgeted. "Hey, I have a couple dollars— do you want a snack or something?"

Will blinked— holy shit it was a date— and looked up at the snack bar sign. "Hot cocoa?"

“Yes! I’m fucking freezing,” Mike said, putting his shoes on. He got up and slung a long arm around Will’s shoulder. “Let’s go.”